

Canada goose *Branta canadensis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Anseriformes

Family: Anatidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The Canada goose is 25 to 43 inches in length. Its heavy body has brown feathers, a long neck with black feathers and black feathers on the head. There is a white patch on each side of the head. The chest feathers are light gray. Both sexes are similar in appearance.

BEHAVIORS

The Canada goose is a common migrant through Illinois. Large numbers of geese reside in Illinois in the winter. It is also a common summer resident statewide in Illinois. The Canada goose lives on and around lakes, ponds, marshes or fields. It is commonly found in urban areas. This bird eats grasses, seeds, corn, wheat and aquatic plants. It is known for its "V" formation flight pattern and its call of "ka-ronk" or "ka-lunk." Spring migration may start as early as January. Nesting occurs from March through June. The nest is a depression in the ground lined with straw, grasses and down feathers. One to 12 tan eggs are laid. Fall migration begins in September.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; Lake Michigan; rivers and streams; marshes

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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